

Creating fertile Economic Gardens and Enabling local Resident Entrepreneurs in Tough Times

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Abstract

The United States needs to create jobs in the aftermath of the Great Recession, and at the same time transition to a more ecologically, economically and socially sustainable future in the face of an altered economic landscape and a clear pattern of environmentally unsustainable growth and a widening gap between rich and poor. In response, states and communities are experimenting with a myriad of growth strategies, some dependent on outside investment and some emphasizing a grow-your-own approach. A complementary concept, called community-based job creation, is distinct in that it focuses on growing businesses and jobs within a region that are accessible to job seekers in those communities and based on sustainability-driven innovations in a range of industry sectors. These efforts create shared value in communities by addressing unmet market opportunities, waste and inefficiencies in targeted sectors as a basis for job creation. The jobs created in many cases are accessible to low-skilled workers with the aid of short-term training and supportive services. Community-based job creation partnerships are described as a key vehicle to develop these opportunities. They can help community-based job creation efforts go to scale through a practical, systems-based approach to growing market demand- and supply-side solutions in place-based industry sectors. And they are often instrumental for ensuring that the jobs created are accessible to community residents. These public-private partnerships are already creating jobs, many of them net additions to the economy, in communities across the United States. While a national study of the potential is outside the scope of this study, an illustrative case study of Detroit, combined with national data and modeling methods, demonstrates the potential to create hundreds of thousands of jobs, some net new, across the United States — jobs that are environmentally beneficial and in many cases accessible to the chronically unemployed.

Community-Based Job Creation

States and communities across the United States are looking for ways to create jobs and help to alleviate high rates of unemployment. Traditionally, states and communities have dedicated much of their resources to attracting companies to their areas to create jobs. But over the last decade, many economic development organizations have experimented with a myriad of growth strategies, some dependent on external investments and some emphasizing a grow-your-own approach. Recently, there has been some emphasis on taking a more targeted economic development approach in which business recruitment and expansion is necessary but not sufficient, and development activities explicitly focus on both populations and places (Giloith, 2007). A complementary strategy to this latter concept in particular is an idea we call “community-based job creation.” It focuses on growing businesses and jobs within a region that are accessible to job seekers in those communities and based on sustainability-driven innovations in emerging sectors of a community’s economy. A sustainability lens helps identify new opportunities for job creation based on synergistic ecological, social and economic performance improvements in targeted sectors. There is particular value in addressing sustainability-driven innovations in industry sectors that support the pillars of a community economy, including food, buildings, energy, transportation and manufacturing. In many of these sectors there are inefficiencies, waste and other local market opportunities that are unmet by traditional economic and business development approaches. These opportunities can be the basis for new community-based products and services to meet both local and export-oriented demand. In addition, many of the jobs are accessible with short-term training and less than a two- or four-year degree, and with community-based partnerships can create pathways to jobs and careers for lower-skilled residents with disadvantaged backgrounds.

Community-based job creation differs from traditional economic development in that cities and regions can play an important role in stimulating demand for sustainable products and services that encourage innovation and new business development. The core work of community-based job creation is building the base of entrepreneurs, businesses and sectors of companies where jobs can be established and sustained locally. This means focusing and refining traditional economic development tools to target key emerging sectors and specific companies that are intentional and deliberate about the building of social and human capital within their enterprises and within the community. States and communities can play an integral role in these efforts through policies and investments that support public-private sector partnerships to address these local market opportunities. This can create (net) new jobs that advance environmentally preferable technologies and services while ensuring that jobs are accessible to low-income and low-skilled residents.

To illustrate the potential of community-based job creation, this paper focuses on economic activities in two of the economic pillars of communities – food systems and buildings – within the context of one city, Detroit. In Detroit alone, the community-based job creation strategy is already creating jobs, and with the right support has the potential, for example, to create hundreds of jobs from deconstruction and salvage material sales, thousands of jobs from home energy upgrades, and hundreds if not thousands of jobs from growth of a local and regional food system. Some of these jobs will simply displace existing jobs: For example, the purchase of local food at a farmers’ market replaces purchases at a supermarket and ultimately eliminates supermarket jobs. But all of these sectors are building new markets and expanding local demand for new products, which will keep more spending local, ultimately creating net new jobs.

A good percentage of these jobs could be realized within two to three years if the right actors and policies are in place; indeed, jobs are already being created in the absence of substantial political support. Detroit is a useful case study for community-based job creation, given that it has many opportunities for capitalizing on underserved communities with inefficiency, waste and unmet demand. Demonstrating the feasibility of this opportunity in such an improbable case study, a city where there is limited local revenue to reinvest in economic development and where “green” issues have not historically been a driver of change, not only bodes well for Detroit but also indicates potentially broad applicability to other regions.

[A Framework for Action: Community-Based Job Creation Partnerships](#)

In a number of communities around the country, partnerships are forming to address unmet market demand and inefficiencies and waste in the community as well as to help create jobs that are accessible to residents of those communities. These *community-based job creation partnerships* (CBJCPs) focus on economic development and local market building, industry resource alignment, business innovation and local talent and workforce development. They base efforts on shared values in the community around environmental, social and economic priorities, thereby helping to engage and build alliances with a broad range of community stakeholders. Community-based job creation partnerships are placing an emphasis on job creation through the following policy strategies:

1. **Enable It: Organize Communities to Drive Market Demand**

CBJCPs recognize the role that public policy can play in supporting a viable market for products and services provided by targeted industry sectors. Therefore, they advocate for existing state and local programs and policies to nurture public demand for local goods and services, making community-based markets more accessible to area entrepreneurs.

2. Build It: Target Emerging Sectors Ripe for Development

CBJCPs look for industry sector activities with the greatest potential for community-based job creation. Then they implement and support development of sustainability-driven innovations in those emerging industries, efforts that tend to be cost-neutral and result in jobs and community wealth because they save money and energy, repurpose and add value to local assets, and grow demand for new goods and services that can be locally produced.

3. Support It: Employ Economic Gardening and Microenterprise Development

CBJCPs realize there are often many barriers to small-business development. Removing these barriers can help accelerate job creation. Therefore, they provide support and technical assistance that builds the capacity of local entrepreneurs and businesses to satisfy increased demand for products and services from targeted industry sectors.

4. Supply It: Enable Local Talent Engagement and Development

CBJCPs understand the importance of human capital to industry development and how public support can be critical to ensure that those facing the biggest hurdles can access job opportunities created. Therefore, they work with employers, educational partners and community-based organizations to develop innovative policies and programs that improve the skills of low-income workers and link more directly to emerging employment opportunities, including providing alternative forms of employment and training (i.e., supportive employment, transitional employment, on-the-job training and apprenticeships).

5. Sustain It: Align Efforts to Achieve Collective Impact in the Community

Strategically minded and mature CBJCPs employ a systems-based approach that integrates all of the above strategies. They know that true, lasting impact in a community happens when all available resources are brought to bear, and collective efforts are coordinated across existing agency and policy infrastructures. Therefore, they work to align seemingly disparate policies, programs and practices in economic, community and workforce development so that they leverage each others' resources and attract private sector investment that leads to self-financing solutions. They remain agile and focused on impact so that they continue to add value indefinitely or until the market and industry sector matures and no longer needs assistance.

There are already numerous examples of CBJCPs in the country despite a lack of explicit policy at state and local levels to facilitate their creation and success. There remains a substantial opportunity in the United States to support job creation through policy that enables and builds capacity of CBJCPs in states and

communities across the country. However, there are substantial barriers to community-based job creation that need to be overcome, particularly in terms of outdated policy, lack of public and civic leader awareness, and yet-to-be-fully proven business models for emerging industry opportunities in foundational sectors of the community. Therefore, while sector-specific policies are touched upon in this paper, the principal focus is on policies that support CBJCP efforts to overcome these barriers to organize and accelerate community-based job creation.

Detroit's Community-Based Job Creation Ecosystem

The following case study of Detroit is meant to provide a window into how the idea of community-based job creation is playing out in the context of one city. The information is drawn from the work done by the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce over the past decade, augmented by recent interviews with key stakeholders in each sector. This paper also identifies and applies national research and averages to estimate the potential for job creation in Detroit. Our goals are to illustrate the potential opportunities for job creation and the role of CBJCPs in making it a reality in Detroit, and to identify policy levers that enable these partnerships to play out elsewhere. We focus on the creation of jobs in the areas of building deconstruction and material salvage, home energy upgrades, and local and regional food systems. We devote substantial attention to the role that states and communities can play to enable job creation, in part through CBJCPs. The job creation models presented provide a rough estimate. Only a full-fledged economic impact analysis could fully illuminate the potential for net new job creation, including additions from induced job creation (which can be substantial) as well as reductions due to job transfers, offsets and other factors.

Sector in Focus: Enabling a Deconstruction and Salvaged Material Market

Potential for Job Creation

“Deconstruction” is defined as the process of removing a building by taking it apart in the reverse order of construction in order to recover materials for creative reuse and recycling. Depending on the methods used and the extent to which materials are salvaged, estimates of direct jobs created range from two to eight for every one job in standard demolition (Architectural Salvage Warehouse of Detroit, Rebuilding Center; Browning and Beck, 2006). So, if a two-person crew can demolish a 2,000-square-foot-house in a day (Salant, 2008), it would require 40 workers to tear down 5,000 houses in a year [5,000 houses / (50 weeks * 5 days/week) * 2 workers/house].

Whereas the job creation potential of the demolished material ends at the landfill, deconstruction creates many more jobs after the house is removed. There are an estimated 10 resource recovery jobs for every landfill job (Languell, 2000). More specifically, one-tenth of one job is created for every 1,000 tons of waste that is dumped in a landfill. In contrast, processing recyclable material creates one to two jobs, while manufacturing using recycled materials creates four to 10 jobs (depending on the sector) per 1,000 tons of waste (Leigh, 2011). The average 2,000-square-foot home adds up to about 8,000 pounds of waste (National Association of Homebuilders Research Center, 2001).

Jobs in deconstruction and related industries offer opportunities for both skilled laborers (existing dislocated construction workers and contractors) and low- and unskilled (low-income) workers who participate in appropriate training programs, and offer a pathway into the construction sector as a whole. The basic skills needed for deconstruction can be easily learned and transferred to the construction trades, and unskilled and low-skilled workers can receive on-the-job training in use of basic tools and techniques for carpentry, construction and materials recovery. Traditional demolition contractors can expand their business to include deconstruction, thereby increasing revenues, and the sector is ripe for entrepreneurship and small-business development through reuse, remanufacturing and resale (Languell, 2000).

Deconstruction can be cost-neutral or cost-beneficial compared with demolition. One study demonstrated net costs 10 percent and 37 percent lower than traditional demolition, because salvaged material sales and reduced disposal costs more than offset increased labor costs (Guy and McLendon, 2001). The presence of a market for diverted materials is critical for the cost benefits of deconstruction to be realized. Virtually all of the material that ends up in a landfill when a building is demolished can be reclaimed and either reused in its original form (e.g., as windows, doors, flooring) or used as secondary materials. A common market is reuse stores, which specialize in selling salvaged materials to consumers and building industry professionals along with artists and furniture makers looking for low-cost supplies.

Value-added remanufacturing of diverted materials is another potential market. Drywall can be pulverized and used as a soil amendment, and concrete can be crushed and used as aggregate or fill. Recycled aggregate can be used as a sub-base in road construction, general fill, asphalt concrete and cement concrete. Lumber can be salvaged and reused in a nonstructural capacity, including high-value-added activities such as unique and handcrafted furniture (Leigh, 2011).

Detroit Mayor Dave Bing has slated 10,000 homes for removal by the end of 2013 (as many as 40,000 more are designated for removal thereafter). In attempting to quantify the job creation potential of deconstruction in Detroit, we assume that 50 percent (5,000) of those houses are suitable for

deconstruction based on WARM Training Center's estimates (C. Rutherford, personal communication, August 5, 2011). We estimate that deconstruction of 5,000 homes could generate approximately 200 direct jobs over one year in deconstruction (using a middle-of-the-road estimate of five jobs for every one job in demolition, which would otherwise directly employ 40 people), 30 indirect jobs in materials processing (20,000 tons of waste at 1.5 jobs per 1,000 tons), 42 indirect jobs in remanufacturing (7,000 tons of usable waste at six jobs per 1,000 tons) — for a total of 272 jobs. Subtracting out the displacement of 43 jobs that would have been created from demolishing the same number of homes (40 direct, plus three indirect jobs handling waste), deconstruction of these jobs produces 229 *net new jobs*. *This additional job creation can come at virtually no additional cost to the public*, given that cities already invest in demolition. The cost born by cities for deconstruction can potentially be kept nearly the same as for demolition while, by conservative estimates, creating six times as many jobs from the additional deconstruction labor and resale, remanufacture and recycling of salvaged materials. At an estimated cost of \$7,000 per demolition paid in the city (C. Rutherford, personal communication, August 5, 2011), total cost of deconstructing 5,000 homes would be \$35,000,000, or \$128,676 per job, while it takes on average \$813,953 spent on demolition to create one job. In this scenario, cost per job (direct and related jobs combined) would be = $\$7,000 * 5,000 / 272 = \$128,676$. This is compared with a cost per job in demolition of $\$7,000 * 5,000 / 43 = \$813,953$. Assuming that roughly half of the remaining 40,000 homes designated for removal in the city are suitable for deconstruction, the jobs created could be sustained for several years. When we add in homes outside of the city proper that are designated for removal, along with the private market demand, there is potential for job creation and sustained work for the medium and longer term as well. Nationally, there are approximately 245,000 residential dwelling units demolished each year (NAHB). If half of these were deconstructed instead, it would conservatively create 3,675 jobs: 2,450 direct jobs [$122,500 * 100/5000$] and 1,225 indirect jobs [$122,500 * 72/5000$]. While somewhat modest in number, these are net new jobs that cannot be outsourced and are significant to communities that are looking for as many ways as possible to create jobs for their residents.

Emerging Community-Based Job Creation Partnerships

The deconstruction industry in Detroit is in its infancy. There is a CBJCP conducting pilot programs in deconstruction (WARM, Zachary and Associates, and Henry Ford Community College), and others provide deconstruction services (Architectural Salvage Warehouse, and ReUse stores). Through funding available for local job training programs, CBJCPs have started to create the systems and develop processes while taking advantage of subsidized employment. But they recognize that they must be able to get to scale quickly. To do that, it will be important to educate contractors on the value of adopting deconstruction as a model, and to make clear the economic benefits of doing so and how to access the markets. As one response, Henry

Ford Community College (HFCC) has developed a course on management of deconstruction, which is aimed at city managers, construction heads and others seeking to learn the business of deconstruction. Additionally, the college will be teaching community development workers how to evaluate neighborhoods in terms of deconstruction potential.

In terms of markets, the Detroit area has several ReUse stores, which provide a tax write-off for donated materials, and many of which also provide deconstruction services on their own or through private contractors. The presence of these options is one means of encouraging contractors to consider expanding into deconstruction. There is a global market for salvaged materials, although ideally a local market and remanufacturing capacity would also be created. For example, the Detroit firm Zachary and Associates set up a woodworking workshop to turn old oak 2x4s, which can retail for up to \$10 each, into window frames for historic homes. When reglazed, the resulting windows are more energy efficient than most new vinyl windows. The firm is also training workers in the process, a skill set that can pay up to \$30 an hour (Woods, 2011). The large number of homes to be removed in Detroit means that salvaged material from several houses could be aggregated and sold in larger lots suitable for remanufacturing.

The WARM-Zachary and Associates-HFCC CBJCP is experimenting with models for deconstruction that would be cost-competitive with demolition even without taking into account the value of salvaged materials. Their model involves taking the house apart in large chunks and having the bulk of the deconstruction work take place in warehouses. This lessens the amount of time on site and allows the use of a broader pool of available labor – with higher-skilled workers engaging where they are needed, and lower-skilled or entry level workers working in parallel at jobs such as removing nails. It also enables economies of scale across multiple structures rather than requiring a separate team for each worksite. This CBJCP is partnering with the City of Hamtramck (a separate municipality almost completely surrounded by Detroit) in a pilot deconstruction project. As many as 20 houses are being deconstructed, allowing trainees to get hands-on experience and the CBJCP to test new models for improving deconstruction efficiency. Compared with doing such a pilot in Detroit, the smaller size of Hamtramck meant that there was less bureaucracy to negotiate, and more flexibility to modify demolition permitting restrictions to cover deconstruction. Additionally, Hamtramck leaders are fully in support of the philosophy of deconstruction and are putting policies in place to require contractors to use at least a minimum amount of recycled materials.

The Hamtramck example demonstrates that political will is a key requirement for CBJCPs to be able to bring efforts such as this to scale. Currently, Detroit does not have permitting policies for deconstruction (it covers demolition only), and many of the requirements do not make sense in the context of deconstruction. Cities have the ability to influence the adoption of deconstruction via their permitting process and adjustment of

tipping fees. There are also potential economic benefits to doing so, and an economic impact assessment should be conducted to quantify the likely gains in jobs and tax revenues. CBJCPs can play an important role in making the case and ensuring that job creation opportunities in deconstruction are realized.

Sector in Focus: Scaling Up Home Energy Upgrades

Potential for Job Creation

The biggest barriers to job creation and growth in this industry are market demand and financing. Energy efficiency requires an up-front investment in order to reap the environmental and economic savings. Unfortunately, many people are unaware of the benefits and do not see the value in investing in energy efficiency. In addition, there are significant financing barriers to energy efficiency. First, homeowners need to have the capital up front to invest in home repairs and energy upgrades. Second, contractors often do not have the working capital to support large projects when they must provide the up-front investment for subsequent reimbursements. While there remain challenges to taking the opportunities identified by many to scale, across the country areas that are seeing more rapid uptake often have CBJCPs (one agency or multiple collaborating agencies) creating the market and accelerating this job creation. They have created hundreds of mostly net new jobs regionally within the past few years and have the potential to create thousands of jobs in the medium term (three to 10 years) (Redman, 2010; Goldman et al., 2010). And, many of the jobs require only short-term training and some on-the-job training to access entry-level (e.g., installer) and supervisory (e.g., crew supervisor) roles. Even higher-skilled jobs (e.g., energy auditor) do not necessarily require a two- or four-year degree. As with deconstruction, many of the jobs being created in the home performance industry are accessible to community residents regardless of background, with some exceptions. However, even workers with a criminal background can, in some cases, find employment if they have the right support. For example, federal bonding can underwrite any perceived liability contractors assume if they hire people with a criminal background.

If demand for energy upgrades was to increase and the home performance market and industry were to grow to their full potential, it could be a significant source of job growth — in direct as well as indirect jobs. Already, estimates are that there are roughly 150,000 existing workers in the home performance industry across the United States (Redman, 2010). That number could double or triple by 2020 (Goldman et al., 2010). Based on national wage data, for every \$1 million invested in home energy upgrades it is estimated that 7.5 to 10 jobs are created (Sundquist, 2009). In addition, it is estimated that for every direct job created, nine indirect jobs are created from home performance industry economic activity (Wei and Kammen, 2009).

Factoring in average wages in Detroit, we conservatively estimate that an investment of \$1 million would create between 5.4 and 7.2 direct new jobs (FTEs), or 6.3 jobs (on average), depending on the degree to which workers receive benefits (Economic Modeling Specialists Inc. 2011 data set). Based on just the \$10 million to be invested by the Southeast Michigan Regional Energy Office (SEMREO) and the state on the Better Buildings for Michigan program to weatherize 800 homes in the Detroit area (S. Offen and P. Hadley, personal communications, August 19, 2011), we estimate 63 full-year jobs created over the three-year period of the grant. More broadly, there are more than 800,000 housing units in Wayne County (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011), many of which could benefit from home energy upgrades. If just 10 percent (80,000) of these units invested \$3,500 each in energy efficiency improvements, there is the potential to create 1,764 direct jobs in the region over the next several years [$80,000 * \$3,500 * 6.3 / 1,000,000$]. A higher level of investment per home (\$6,500 is the average under Michigan's investment assumptions) would translate into 3,276 direct jobs/year. In addition, 15,876 to 29,484 indirect jobs would be created, depending on the level of investment (\$3,500 versus \$6,500), creating a total of 17,640 to 32,760 jobs in the Detroit area (on an annual basis). Total costs for upgrading the 80,000 homes would amount to \$280 million to \$520 million, depending on the level of investment, with a cost of \$15,873 per job [$\$280,000,000 / 17,640$]. According to the American Housing Survey, there were 125,494,034 occupied housing units in the United States in 2009. If 10 percent of these were upgraded (12,549,403 homes) at a cost of \$3,500 per home (\$43.9 billion), this spending would generate between 237,184 and 316,245 direct jobs, and 2.1 million to 2.8 million indirect jobs (over one year, using national estimates described earlier), across the country.

Emerging Community-Based Job Creation Partnerships

Detroit's emerging CBJCPs are driving demand in the residential energy efficiency sector, creating financing mechanisms, connecting contractors with residents seeking energy upgrades, and connecting contractors to training programs working with low-income and unemployed Detroit residents. The SEMREO is a partnership between the WARM Training Center, the Michigan Suburbs Alliance, and the Michigan Municipal League. Working with the State of Michigan Energy Office, SEMREO was able to secure a \$10 million grant from the U.S. Department of Energy's Better Buildings program and institute a home energy loan program that will be replenished and continue to regenerate and support growth of the industry over time. SEMREO is currently leading an effort to provide energy upgrades for nearly 800 homes in the region. To date, the program has performed four neighborhood sweeps (efforts to bundle properties and create neighborhood-wide buy-in), performed energy assessments for 1,100 homes, provided base-level weatherization services for 323 homes, and implemented 21 deeper energy upgrades (S. Offen and P. Hadley, personal communications, August 19, 2011). The relatively low rate of uptake in deeper energy upgrades speaks to the challenge facing the market, including economic uncertainty and the ability of homeowners qualifying for available

credit. Administrators have designed significant outreach methods to connect with neighborhood homeowners (often in low-income neighborhoods) to educate them on the amount of money they could save through energy upgrades. This outreach has taken a variety of forms, including canvassing neighborhoods, holding block parties and cultivating energy efficiency champions. This critical education function of the CBJCP helps drive demand for the industry. SEMREO has also been connecting contractors with area training providers specifically targeting and training low-income persons.

Recognizing the need to support growth of the home performance industry and ensure career pathways for residents in the region, the Detroit Regional Workforce Fund, a \$3.5 million collaboration among 10 public and private funding entities, is partnering with the WARM Training Center (and its associates at SEMREO), NextEnergy and other area stakeholders and making an initial investment of \$250,000 over three years to launch an “energy sector alliance.”ⁱ This CBJCP will work to create a comprehensive strategy for the sector by growing market demand, leveraging public and private support and investments, working to align policies and community outreach initiatives, and creating career pathways for Detroit area residents through a coordinated network of community-based training providers.

[Sector in Focus: Scaling Up Local and Regional Food Systems](#)

Potential for Job Creation

Scaling up urban agriculture and regional food systems creates net new jobs and reclaims many jobs that were lost in agriculture and food processing. While the focus of this paper is on Michigan and Detroit, many regions in the United States have substantial agricultural production capacity and metropolitan areas that offer substantial opportunities for linking demand with local sourcing. Countless food manufacturing operations have closed down in cities across the country since the 1940s (Michigan Good Food Charter, 2011). However, this trend is beginning to shift, and we see an emerging local food systems sector creating jobs across the nation in response to renewed interest in health, taste, heritage, the environment and other factors. Locally grown food is one of the fastest-growing segments of the food market across the country. Direct-to-consumer sales, for example, have undergone an annual growth rate of about 10 percent per year, exceeding the 5 percent growth rate of the rest of the food economy (Martinez et al., 2010). Jobs are being created based on new kinds of farm businesses, rebuilt and modernized processing and distribution infrastructure, diverse food products and restored relationships between producers and consumers as well as food service.

While there are limited national studies of the job creation of local food systems, state and regional studies have shown a range of 1 to 2.2 jobs for every \$100,000 of new sales of local food (Deller, 2009; Shuman, 2009). Using the conservative estimate of roughly one job per \$100,000 in new sales of local food, a study of Southeast Michigan found that a shift to 20 percent local food purchasing by 2020 has the potential to create nearly 35,882 jobs in that part of the state, and 4,719 jobs in Detroit alone (Shuman, 2009). These new jobs would likely be offset in part by losses in production that currently occurs elsewhere, which is increasingly abroad, given that the United States has significantly increased food imports in the past decade (Brooks et al., 2009). It is also possible that the substitution of local and domestic products for foreign products could result in higher consumer prices in some cases, which in turn could lead to reduced spending and job losses in other sectors. On the other hand, there is an equally strong case that local agriculture and food systems build community wealth and support investment and economic activity in a range of related industries in the food cluster such as agritourism, health products, apparel, bioenergy and much more, attracting new investment and stimulating a broad range of economic activity that creates indirect jobs (Rosenfeld, 2011). Given the complexity of the food system and the limits of available research, it is outside the scope of this paper to estimate net new job creation potential from regional food systems. Nonetheless, there is a compelling case to be made to state and local policymakers that local and regional food systems can be a driver for creating jobs within their region.

In Michigan, it is estimated that already nearly 10 percent of the food consumed in the state is produced in the state (Michigan State University); and a group of statewide leaders in Michigan believe the 20 percent by 2020 goal is attainable statewide (Michigan Good Food Charter, 2011). Moreover, large institutions are beginning to buy in (literally) to the opportunity. For example, the Michigan Health & Hospital Association recently began encouraging all member hospitals to set a policy goal of procuring 20 percent of their food from local producers by 2020 (Keeping, 2011). In addition, the Detroit Public Schools system worked with the Food System Economic Partnership to launch a Farm to School program that now serves 46 schools and is expected to go districtwide in 2012 (M. Rehmann and J. Bush, personal communications, July 29, 2011).

Many jobs across the food system – including growing, processing, and preparing local and regional food – are accessible to lower- and middle-skill workers with some training (often on-the-job training is the preference in this industry). Of course, regional food system job creation efforts can elevate the quality of job opportunities and the scale of the industry as a result by supporting increased workforce and skill standards, particularly given historical challenges with working conditions and wages in the sector. Regional food systems and community-based job creation efforts can help advance these higher standards by focusing on shared values, growing worker skills and job quality, and supporting triple bottom community benefits.

Emerging Community-Based Job Creation Partnerships

There is a CBJCP focused on growing a regional food system in the greater Detroit area that includes Eastern Market, the Fair Food Network, the Detroit Economic Growth Corporation (DEGC), Greening of Detroit, Recovery Park, the Detroit Black Community Food Security Network and many others. This loosely affiliated CBJCP is collectively supporting the launch of grocery stores, regional food hubs (aggregation centers) and urban farming and processing facilities.

As part of this effort, Eastern Market is leveraging its capacity as a major food business district to create a Regional Food Hub with the potential to employ 12 people (the national average for regional food hubs, according to the National Food Hub Collaboration, 2011) in aggregating regionally grown food and selling to larger-scale and institutional buyers. A single source for procurement is essential for viability in large institutional food markets where purchasers are in some cases restricted from dealing with multiple vendors.

The Detroit Economic Growth Corporation has worked with multiple entrepreneurs to start new groceries to address the gap in healthy food availability in the city – one estimate is that the city can support between 583,000 and 1 million additional square feet of grocery store capacity (Detroit Fresh Food Access Initiative, 2008). To do so, the corporation has reduced risks to banks and helped lower the interest rates on loans, provided technical assistance, and conducted outreach to the community to ensure that businesses can more effectively meet community needs. In just over a year, they have supported the launch of two new grocery businesses that will provide an additional 30,000 square feet and employ 30 people (S. Fleming, personal communication, June 3, 2011), with Whole Foods also recently announcing development of a downtown store that will employ 50 to 60 people and make it the only national grocery chain with a store in the city (The Whole Foods Market Midtown Detroit Team, 2011). Whole Foods has been actively working with the city and DEGC to engage the community in its planning. DEGC is also coordinating with the Fair Food Foundation to create a network for aspiring grocery store entrepreneurs in order to support capacity to address the market gap of the food system in the city (M. Freeman, personal communication, May 11, 2011).

On the production and processing side of the CBJCP, Recovery Park plans to create jobs for Detroit residents through growing and processing food. Led by the SHAR Foundation, this effort is in the early stages of funding urban-agriculture-related social enterprises involved in growing, pickling, canning, frozen foods, farm-to-school programs, processing, labor-intensive packaging, and repurposing of buildings and land. In particular, they plan to develop 90 to 100 acres of production (in 20-to-30-acre plots that can employ up to 12 people) in the first year that can then support a processing facility employing two to three times the number of people working the farm – for a rough total of 150 people employed producing and processing

local food. Given that the SHAR Foundation has access to as many as 2,400 acres in the Detroit area, it could potentially create thousands of jobs in the region from this model over the long term. In other regions that may not have as much unused land, production can occur outside the city limits, where land may be more accessible (G. Wozniak, personal communication, August 3, 2011).

Community-Based Job Creation in Targeted Sectors: The Role of Public Policy

Creating jobs now and building the foundation for new and more sustainable economies going forward is a community-based, collaborative enterprise that will require supportive local, state and federal policy frameworks and sustained investment for job creation to go to scale. Table 1 provides a description of the kinds of policies that can help the industry sectors studied in this paper go to scale and create jobs [insert Table 1]. It is broken down by the key step and strategy of community-based job creation to which it is most helpful. It is not an exhaustive list of supportive policies in these sectors, and, given the focus, this paper does not go into great detail on each policy presented. In addition, the policies described can individually as well as collectively accelerate and help job creation go to scale in the targeted industries. However, we do not mean to suggest that all of the policies covered need to be in place in order for any level of job creation to occur.

Creating Necessary Conditions for Community-Based Job Creation

Advancing community-based job creation can be done in many ways, as illustrated by looking at Detroit and the work emerging in the three sectors studied in this paper. If this is so, then in general what are the kinds of policies, programs and practices that are helping to make this happen? How do all of these supports fit together to add up to the comprehensive approach? And how can communities start to make community-based job creation a reality?

The following section provides the “how to” part of the framework. Especially in times when new major public investments are unpalatable, community-based job creation offers a way to build jobs from the bottom up, benefit the whole community and ensure that those who most need jobs can access them.

Scaling Up Community-Based Job Creation: Key Policy Strategies and Activities

CBJCPs can accelerate job creation in targeted industries using the following high-leverage policy strategies:

1. Enable It: Organize Communities to Drive Market Demand

While community-based job creation can start out on a small (even micro-) scale and be hyper-local in nature, supportive policy is key for it to go to scale and be sustainable. Policies can take many shapes and forms. In many cases, the alignment of existing policies – for example, the agreement between the state, utilities and community-based organizations around workforce standards for the Better Buildings program – can have as big an impact and is more politically palatable than a major new policy or investment. Therefore, it is critical to engage key state and local policymakers around the set of opportunities based on their interests, be it jobs, environment, profit, community needs or something else. Efforts to educate the public about health, environmental and economic opportunities through products and services supported by local assets can help grow demand for new goods and services that can be locally produced (Nixon and Weiss, 2011). For example, the Michigan Good Food Charter’s 20 percent by 2020 campaign has already led the hospital association in the state to adopt the goal, helping to generate increased demand and making for a more viable market. In addition, advocating for existing state and local programs and policies to nurture public demand for local goods and services can help make community-based markets more accessible to area entrepreneurs (Shuman, 2000). This involves raising awareness, building local champions and helping the public access valuable products and services that save money and have unique environmental benefits. Community-based organizations are key partners in building trust, conducting outreach and mobilizing community stakeholders and residents in particular. It is equally important that there be financial incentives to stimulate demand for products and practices that reduce energy and material waste and support job creation in emerging sectors (e.g., availability of low-interest loans for energy upgrades, higher fees for recoverable waste disposal, etc.).

2. Build It: Target Emerging Sectors Ripe for Development

Generally, successful community-based job creation efforts implement strategies that grow the market for products and services in emerging, sustainability-driven industries, which tend to be cost-neutral and result in jobs and community wealth because they save money, energy, time and other resources (Nixon, 2009). In many cases, community-based job creation efforts build upon local assets such as repurposed vacant land; existing business sectors, research and educational institutions; a workforce with skills that can be brought to bear; and even cultural commitment (e.g., to farmland preservation) (Rosenfeld, 2002). While there may be existing local and regional efforts underway to support development of

targeted sectors, they may not be focused specifically on job creation as a direct or even indirect outcome and aren't looking at how to engage local residents and entrepreneurs in the development work. For example, the state of Michigan's Better Buildings program has evolved to become more focused on job creation, and now has the support of a new home performance sector partnership that targets both job creation and workforce development. The partnership is supported by the state and the Detroit Regional Workforce Fund, which is addressing this opportunity. Policymakers can help bring this much-needed focus by investing in existing regional efforts that will take on the role of a CBJCP, or through the formation of new CBJCPs. These CBJCPs can then help targeted emerging sectors to better understand and address the local market opportunity as well as the export market potential. Of course, the need to "build the plane while flying it" is often an unavoidable reality in community-based job creation efforts; therefore, clear and even small-scale wins can help cement stakeholder commitment (directly or indirectly).

3. **Support It: Employ Economic Gardening and Microenterprise Development Resources**

Barriers to meeting the growth in demand often occur because of, for example, lack of commercial infrastructure and capacity to commercialize activity (e.g., getting to the scale needed) to meet growing demand. In response, communities can look at how their economic and workforce development strategies can become agile enough to provide support and technical assistance that build the capacity of local entrepreneurs and businesses to satisfy increased demand. This includes connecting into traditional resources such as small-business centers and business incubators (e.g., community kitchens, etc.) and supporting development of new community-based business models (e.g., social enterprises). This also includes helping entrepreneurs to access capital; develop products, marketing materials and other resources key to the success of their business; and connect to community and sector partnerships that address regional industry development needs, including consumer demand and market financing (Woods and Muske, 2007). In Detroit, the Micro-Enterprise Fund has stepped in to create accessible financing and working capital to assist contractors with obtaining loans that, among other benefits, help them to survive cash-flow issues and make additional hires needed to take on more work. Engaging groups of firms in targeted sectors can help identify shared industry and workforce needs and can create a stronger voice to advocate for policy changes that loosen restrictions and otherwise help level the playing field for small businesses in targeted industry sectors, such as by simplifying permitting processes and generally limiting regulations for small-scale operations. Small businesses can be engaged to create jobs for unemployed people in the communities they serve, including transitional jobs and direct hires.

4. Supply It: Enable Local Talent Engagement and Development

Part of job creation is ensuring that barriers to hiring are removed. To ensure that the jobs are filled by people in the community, community-based job creation efforts need to work with employers, educational partners and community-based organizations to develop policies and programs that improve the skills of low-income workers and link them directly to emerging employment opportunities. State sector strategies supporting sector initiatives at the local level are a proven model for ensuring that this talent pipeline is ready and simultaneously meets employer needs and creates worker career pathways. In Detroit, the state has partnered with the Detroit Regional Workforce Fund to invest in such partnerships dedicated to energy efficiency and food system sector partnerships. Effective resident engagement and skill development is essential for ensuring access to emerging job opportunities. In these cases, offering a seamless continuum of support, including alternative forms of employment and training (i.e., supportive employment, transitional employment, on-the-job training, apprenticeships and internships), can lower barriers to entry/employment and help create pathways for people of diverse backgrounds in the community. This includes improving the information and navigation supports that allow people to make informed choices about preparing for and succeeding in available and emerging jobs. It also includes working with partners to close gaps or develop pathways where they do not exist, and using tools such as community-benefits agreements to increase local hiring opportunities. In Detroit, a coalition was successful in getting such an agreement embedded in contractor RFPs released by the Better Buildings program in Southeast Michigan. More broadly, community-based job creation efforts can go further if they get involved in addressing citywide industry workforce needs around recruiting talent, up-skilling the existing workforce, creating work quality and industry-based skill standards, and promoting strategies to retain employees and create career pathways so that people can advance and open up their old jobs for new hires. Exploring how local employment and talent development strategies can be integrated into cluster and sector development efforts is critical (Giloith, 2004 and 2007).

5. Sustain It: Align Efforts to Achieve Collective Impact in the Community

Each of the above steps can independently contribute to the creation of community-based jobs. However, if connected together and advanced in a collective and sustained way over years, they can lead to substantial job creation of the kind that provides good jobs for those who need them most while building economic capital overall and shoring up social and environmental capital as well. This is the difference between a good “project” that may be tied to a single funding source, and a collective-impact effort that has gone to scale and is potentially a model that can be applied elsewhere (Kania and Kramer, 2011). As we have discussed, scaled impact through intentional efforts toward community-based job creation is emerging in Detroit and across the country in the face of a stagnant economic

climate overall. While straightforward on paper, fostering habits of collaboration can be a challenge. Solid strategies for engagement, resource development, planning and – equally important – strategic and coordinated action can mean the difference between short- and long-term success. This includes creating a shared, community-based vision for change that is based on a common understanding of the problem of job creation and a joint approach to solving it through agreed-upon actions. It also involves developing a community-wide, shared measurement system for collecting data on job creation and measuring the results consistently on a short list of indicators at the community level and across all participating organizations. In Detroit, managers of energy efficiency programs at utilities, nonprofit agencies and city government agencies are convened regularly by NextEnergy to create a shared set of metrics and reporting mechanisms, while community-based training providers convened by the Detroit Regional Workforce Fund have begun to build a centralized database of available training programs and standards that help coordinate and align supply and demand so that resources available for energy efficiency workforce development get put to their best use. Finally, building trust among nonprofits, corporations and government agencies to be able to work across a disparate set of policies, programs and practices is essential to achieving these types of community-based job creation goals.

Individually and collectively, these policy strategies can help accelerate and scale up community-based job creation. Given that CBJCPs are a key mechanism to advance these opportunities, the next section addresses the specific roles that key stakeholders can play to support them.

[Supporting Community-Based Job Creation Partnerships: Key Stakeholder Roles](#)

CBJCPs can take many forms and be led by different agencies, depending on where the capacity and resources are within the community agency ecosystem. CBJCPs typically involve a variety of stakeholders, given that community-based job creation requires a variety of policy changes and needs to leverage an array of resources for substantial job creation to occur. States and local government agencies, along with private sector and philanthropic leaders, can take a variety of steps to support and catalyze development of CBJCPs and related enterprises. The following section provides a starter framework for supporting CBJCPs.

Federal Government

At a minimum, agencies of the federal government can support job creation through CBJCPs by allowing for existing funding mechanisms to be used for CBJCPs, including economic development planning, block grants, workforce development, and small business and rural development funding sources, to name a few. Beyond this, incorporating community-based job creation metrics, strategies

and funding streams into existing and new (competitive) funding could help drive and accelerate broader adoption across the country.

State and Local Governments

State and local governments can engage leaders of existing CBJCPs to identify and remove policy barriers and facilitate acceleration of CBJCP activities to create jobs . In addition, they can help educate regional leaders about how CBJCPs can stimulate job creation and job opportunities for all, and low-income, low-skilled area residents in particular. State and local governments can also create incentives to work with CBJCPs – for example, by setting standards and agreements on public sector work, or by applying fees to alternative practices that preclude community-based job creation opportunities. They can invest in CBJCPs through funding, technical assistance, and support for evaluation and communication of results. The level of funding for CBJCPs can vary state to state, and community to community. What is critical is that any level of investment leverages a local organizational infrastructure that can sustain a CBJCP and support revenue generation through a variety of mechanisms. This includes engaging coalitions of community-based organizations to ensure effective resident engagement. Finally, state and local governments can help underwrite risk for enterprises catalyzed or supported by CBJCPs as potential job creators, given that states and local communities have incentives to apply a triple bottom line (financial, social and environmental) accounting of the value of these jobs.

Private Sector Business

Investment by the private sector is essential for community-based job creation to go to scale and be sustainable. Businesses involved or interested in targeted sector development, and small and medium-size businesses in particular, can play an important role in identifying key industry needs that they do not have the resources to address on their own and that a CBJCP could help address. In addition, banks can build local wealth through investment in local enterprises created by CBJCPs, and therefore can help support local jobs and grow their membership through adapted metrics and programs.

Philanthropies

Philanthropic organizations can promote supportive policies and commission studies and communications about the value and potential of CBJCPs as sources of social innovation, job creators for people of diverse backgrounds, and environmental solutions. By pooling funding around CBJCP best practices and supporting state and community co-investment in CBJCPs, philanthropies can leverage proven models and substantial additional funding. To ensure that CBJCP efforts are successful, philanthropies can also provide support for capacity building in critical success areas, including strategic partnership building, policy alignment resource leveraging, sustainable revenue models, data-driven decision-making and industry engagement. Where timing and risk of failure are highest for community-based job creation efforts, philanthropies can act as early (angel, pre-seed) investors and help underwrite social enterprises supported by CBJCPs in the early stage, through program-related investments and grants.

Community-Based Organizations

Community-based coalitions are a key source of potential partners and are also natural allies in efforts to educate and mobilize community demand for products and services as described earlier. Community-based organizations are often well positioned to effectively engage residents and other key stakeholders. They can also help identify unmet market opportunities, build trust in the community for new enterprises, customize sector building efforts to the local socioeconomic context, and ensure that residents have access to industry-recognized training and any needed support services to help them secure employment.

Conclusion

Implications for Future Research

This paper does not take an exhaustive look at community-based job creation across the country, the role that CBJCPs play, or standard practices. This would be worthwhile research to undertake to validate key criteria and the variety of promising practices and strategies. In addition, further research is needed to fully characterize the different shapes, structures, strategies and promising practices that existing CBJCPs are using across the United States. The examples in Detroit may be indicative of what is happening elsewhere; however, further research is needed to characterize a fuller picture about the scale of existing activity, what the barriers are and how they vary by region, and what is the potential for rapid scaling up of these efforts. A formal economic impact analysis of the sectors studied in this paper (and others), including the potential

induced job creation and loss in jobs elsewhere, would also help to provide a fuller picture of the true costs and benefits of pursuing policy strategies in support of CBJCPs.

Sustaining Community-Based Job Creation in Detroit

While Detroit is certainly experimenting with CBJCPs with some success, policies that support community-based job creation and attract private investment can help accelerate and expand the scale of efforts to create many more jobs. Continued public sector investment is likely needed to prove the viability of market opportunities and continue to advance creation of businesses and jobs to capture emerging opportunities in the sectors. However, as the market develops, the private sector is likely to recognize the return on investment, thereby stimulating much greater private investment than has been seen so far. A fuller and more detailed assessment of suitability, potential economic and social impact of community-based job creation in Detroit would help make the case even further and perhaps continue to build on the existing momentum behind efforts described in this paper.

Catalyzing Community-Based Job Creation in Other Places

There is substantial opportunity for additional investment in CBJCPs as a response to the jobless recovery. CBJCPs are already happening across the country in different shapes and focused on different sectors, though they are not often framed specifically as CBJCPs. States and local communities can do much to catalyze CBJCPs in a short time frame by leveraging existing partnerships that might be supported to take a leadership role in a CBJCP, and by aligning available resources and even repurposing other resources as much as possible in support of creating new CBJCPs to capture untapped market and job creation potential in communities.

Final Thoughts

CBJCPs can play a critical role in helping with job creation, given that the market opportunities of the kind discussed in this paper often require novel solutions in response to local context, institutional capacity and resources, and public-private collaboration. They are already creating many jobs in communities across the United States in industry sectors based on sustainability innovations that address unmet market demand, waste and inefficiency. And many of the jobs created are accessible to low-income, low-skilled workers in those communities. If done right and with the right policy supports in place, CBJCPs can begin to help emerging industry sectors go to scale, create jobs and hopefully help address high rates of unemployment in communities across the country.

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Table 1. The Role of Public Policy in the Sectors Studied

Key Steps	Strategies	Deconstruction & Salvage Policies	Home Performance Policies	Regional Food Systems Policies
Enable It	Organize Communities to Drive Market Demand	Pass ordinances requiring material recycling and recovery on job sites	Create energy efficiency standards Set high-performance work quality standards and building codes	Set local sourcing goals and time frames Establish urban farming and food policies/councils
		Incorporate material recovery requirements in permitting processes	Lower consumer loan restrictions/rates	Change procurement policies to encourage local sourcing
Build It	Target Emerging Sectors Ripe for Development	Set high landfill disposal fees for recoverable waste	Incentivize and demonstrate bundling of home retrofits	Rezone land for food business districts and farm plots
		Incentivize use of community-based organizations for outreach		
		Lower small-business loan (working capital) requirements and fees	Channel existing and new economic, workforce and community funding to target sector CBJCPs, specific enterprises, worker training	Issue policies for technical education centers, university extension offices, small-business centers on supporting targeted emerging sectors
Support It	Employ Economic Gardening and Microenterprise Development	Issue public project community benefit agreements and tie workforce standards into permitting processes (e.g., liquor licenses)	Engage sector workforce partnerships and establish job training standards/centers, apprenticeship programs, wage standards and educational articulation agreements	
		Establish/underwrite loan funding programs to leverage private investment in CBJCP-targeted sectors	Institutionalize state and local policy and programs for CBJCP formation and support	Provide funding/incentives for communities that employ CBJCPs
Supply It	Enable Local Talent Engagement and Development			
Sustain It	Align Efforts to Achieve Collective Impact in the Community			

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ⁱ The author is a strategic partner in this effort.

About the Big Ideas for Job Creation Project

Big Ideas for Job Creation, a project of the Institute for Research on Labor and Employment at the University of California, Berkeley, with the support of The Annie E. Casey Foundation, tapped into the innovative thinking of leading experts across the nation to develop job creation proposals. Every idea had to meet the following criteria: designed for implementation by cities and/or states and will lead to net new job creation in the short-term; practical, sustainable, scalable and already tested; and all jobs created should be accessible for low-skilled workers and offer some career opportunity. Taken together, these Big Ideas can create millions of new jobs for our country.

